

FACULTY OF MUSIC
UNIVERSITY OF TORONTO



ANTON KUERTI, PIANIST

ORFORD STRING QUARTET
QUARTET-IN-RESIDENCE

Andrew Dawes, violin
Kenneth Perkins, violin
Terrence Helmer, viola
Marcel St-Cyr, cello

THURSDAY SCHOLARSHIP CONCERT
CONCERT HALL, EDWARD JOHNSON BUILDING

NOVEMBER 22, 1973 AT 8:30 P.M.

Sonata No.24 in F sharp major, op.78

Beethoven

Adagio cantabile; Allegro ma non troppo

Allegro vivace

Although both movements of this short Sonata are allegros (the first movement is Allegro ma non troppo and the last movement Allegro vivace) they are in complete contrast with each other. Perhaps that explains why no middle movement seemed necessary. The first movement is introduced by a short, four-measure Adagio cantabile section. When the Allegro starts, it continues in the same tranquil, introspective mood, so that one is hardly aware of a tempo change. Only occasionally are there some exclamatory passages, especially a sequence of three emphatic chords which may be related to the main motive of the last movement. The last movement gives us the first fleeting taste of what is to come in the late sonatas. While most of the movement is still in the style of the middle period, a few passages approach the ethereal, unconventional qualities of the sonatas yet to come. The chirping sequences of rapid appoggiaturas, the sudden but not light-hearted changes from major to minor and back, the rapid shifts of register in the third and fourth statements of the principal theme, and the haunting harmony of the pianissimo chord preceeding the final outburst - these all point the way ahead.

Fantasia in C major, op.17

Schumann

Sempre fantasticamente ed appassionatamente

Moderato - Sempre energico

Lento sostenuto e sempre piano

The Fantasia in C major was written originally as Schumann's contribution to a fund raising project started by Liszt at the end of 1838 for the erection of a monument to Beethoven at Bonn. Schumann intended to turn over to the subscription fund the proceeds from the sale of this composition which he called then a Grand Sonata for the Pianoforte. Since the Fantasia was intended as a tribute to Beethoven, the first movement was labelled Ruins, the second, Triumphal Arch, and the third, A Starry Crown. But when the piece was published by Breitkopf & Härtel, it was called Fantasia in C major, op.17, dedicated to Liszt, and the original titles of the three movements were removed. Instead, we find the following enigmatic quotation from Friedrich von Schlegel affixed by Schumann to the head of the score: Durch alle Töne tönet, Im bunten Erdentraum, Ein leiser Ton gezogen, Für den, der heimlich lauschet. (Through all the tones that sound in earth's fit-

ful dream, one gentle note is there for the secret listener.) One key to this enigma has been furnished by Gerald Abraham who sees a close thematic resemblance between the first movement of the Fantasia and the sixth song of Beethoven's song cycle, An die Ferne Geliebte. The first movement is a strange mixture of stark power, tenderness and romantic legend. At its start, the composer wrote the following direction to the performer: "Durchaus phantastisch und leidenschaftlich vorzutragen" (to be played with fantasy and passion throughout). One can find in this opening movement faint traces of tripartite structure: there is a strangely gaunt and bare first theme, the dominant theme of the movement, and a beautifully melodious contrasting theme. Both of these are presented regularly in the first portion of the movement and are brought back in the last section. And there is a broad middle section "im Legendenton" (in legendary character) which presents some difficult material. The movement ends with an exquisite adagio which has an alegiac effect. The second movement, in the key of E flat, is a splendid triumphal march in modified rondo form which exceeds the finale of the Symphonic Etudes in triumphant vigor. The recurring principal thematic idea is an exhilarating one, brilliantly written for piano. The last movement contrary to custom, is a long adagio, richly scored and exalted in sentiment. It possesses an ethereal quality as well as an atmosphere of peace after victory which makes it a perfect tribute to Beethoven's memory. This Schumann Fantasia, a work of rarest beauty, is full of such richness of melody and harmony, and so redolent of passion, poetry and imagination that it must stand as one of Schumann's greatest masterpieces.

Intermission

uintet in F minor for Piano and String Quartet

Brahms

Allegro non troppo

Andante, un poco adagio

Scherzo

Allegro non troppo, Presto

he Piano Quintet, op.34 undoubtedly Brahms' most popular and in many respects his most important chamber work, is the result of such labour undertaken at the behest of some of his musical advisors. It was written originally as a string quintet, the score of which is unfortunately lost. At least three movements of this version were finished

in August, 1862, for Clara Schumann refers to it in a letter dated September 3 of that year. In November of the same year, in a letter to the composer, Brahms' friend the violin virtuoso Joachim praises the work highly but remarks that it is exceedingly difficult for the strings. It was apparently this criticism which prompted Brahms to recast the composition as a sonata for two pianos. The second version was finished in February, 1864, and performed in April 1864. Brahms re-did the work in its ultimate form as a quintet for piano and strings. The first movement, *Allegro non troppo*, five highly original and deeply moving thematic ideas are welded by the hand of a master into one whole. Geiringer has accurately remarked that "Despite its first expressive themes, this piece, whose components are welded into a homogeneous form, contains barely 300 bars." The statements of this movement are concise and to the point; their elaborations follow logically from each other. The second movement, *Andante un poco adagio*, is in the manner of a romantic interlude. As a melody the opening theme shows the influence of both Schubert and Beethoven; but in its texture and the unfolding of the various motives from this theme, the movement is clearly akin to Schumann. The third movement, the famous *Scherzo* is unique. It is at once dramatic and mysterious. It cannot be compared to either the dramatic scherzi of Beethoven or the boisterous ones of Bruckner. The conciseness of structure is re-emphasized in this movement through the relationship between scherzo and trio, which are contrasted in several respects. The scherzo is in major, the trio in minor. The theme of the scherzo is based on a rhythmic idea, that of the trio on an expanded melodic theme; yet close listening shows the remarkable fact that the thematic material of the trio is actually a reconversion of that of the scherzo. The finale, after a slow introduction, moves into a fast *Allegro non troppo* whose main theme is inspired by a folk-like melody. The work ends with a coda in *Presto tempo* which very successfully takes up some of the romantic ideas of the opening section of this movement, thus bring it full circle.

Next Scholarship Concert: December 6, 1973
John Hawkins, piano

Next Event: Saturday, November 24, 1973
University of Toronto Symphony Orchestra
at 8:30 p.m.